

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-02
USIA-15 SP-02 AF-10 NSC-05 PM-05 SS-15 /077 W
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INFO SECDEF WASHDC
USMISSION USNATO

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 MADRID 3148

E.O.11652: N.A.
TAGS: MPOL, MARR, NATO, SP, US
SUBJECT: PRESS COVERAGE OF TRIP TO US BY PSOE LEADERS

1. THE MARCH 13-18 U.S. VISIT OF SOCIALIST (PSOE) DEPUTIES ENRIQUE MUGICA (PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS DEFENSE COMMITTEE) AND LUIS SOLANA (THE PARTY'S MAIN DEFENSE EXPERT) RECEIVED FULL COVERAGE IN THE MADRID PRESS, BASED ALMOST ENTIRELY ON STATEMENTS BY THE TWO TRAVELLERS. THROUGHOUT THE VISIT AND IN A PRESS CONFERENCE IN MADRID AFTER THEIR RETURN, BOTH MUGICA AND SOLANA PROJECTED A PARTISAN, ALBEIT RATHER MODERATE IMAGE AIMED AT OBTAINING THE GREATEST POSSIBLE POLITICAL BENEFIT FROM THEIR TRIP BOTH WITH THE MILITARY AND THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL. COVERAGE DURING THE WEEK REPORTED THEIR MEETINGS WITH VARIOUS OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON. SECRETARY BROWN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCGIFFERT AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SIENA OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY VEST AND OTHER STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICERS, WHITE HOUSE AIDE JOSEPH ARAGON AND NSC STAFFERS, AND SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN WERE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN AMONG THOSE TO WHOM MUGICA AND SOLANA EXPLAINED THE PSOE'S POSITION ON SPAIN'S FUTURE DEFENSE ORIENTATION AND OPPOSITION TO NATO MEMBERSHIP.

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2. DURING THEIR TRIP AND ON THEIR RETURN, MUGICA AND SOLANA REPORTEDLY STATED, INTER ALIA, THAT:

-- THE US WILL NOT PRESSURE SPAIN TO JOIN NATO; THAT IS A SPANISH DECISION AND WILL REQUIRE A CONSENSUS AND NOT A SLENDER MAJORITY. THIS SHOULD BE DONE IN THE PARLIAMENT

AND NOT VIA A REFERENDUM. (SOURCES CLOSE TO THE PSOE EXECUTIVE TUESDAY SAID THAT THIS LATTER STATEMENT WAS SOLANA'S PERSONAL VIEW AND NOT PSOE OFFICIAL POLICY.)

-- THE US HAS NO INTEREST IN DIVIDING THE FORCES OF DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN.

-- THEIR US INTERLOCUTORS ASSURED THEM THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT HAS NOT YET EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO JOIN NATO. THE PRO-NATO POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT MUST THEREFORE BE "FOR INTERNAL CONSUMPTION."

-- THEY EXPLAINED THE SOCIALIST IDEA OF AN ALTERNATIVE DEFENSE SYSTEM, SIMILAR TO THAT OF SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND, AND FRANCE, OUTSIDE NATO. US MILITARY OFFICERS RECOMMENDED THEY DISCUSS THIS WITH OTHER WEST EUROPEAN SOCIALIST GOVERNMENTS.

-- NO ONE IN THE US HELD THEIR CONCEPT OF AN ALTERNATE WESTERN DEFENSE SYSTEM TO BE A "UTOPIA", AS HAD SOME SECTORS OF THE SPANISH PRESS. THIS WAS BECAUSE THEIR US INTERLOCUTORS ARE "WELL EDUCATED PEOPLE."

-- THERE IS A RISK TO SPAIN FROM THE USSR, BUT THERE IS A MORE IMMEDIATE THREAT FROM NORTH AFRICA. SINCE NATO WILL NOT PROTECT SPAIN FROM THE LATTER, SPAIN MUST BE UNCLASSIFIED

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ABLE TO DEFEND HERSELF.

-- THEY MET WITH GEN. GUTIERREZ MELLADO (FIRST VICE PRESIDENT AND DEFENSE MINISTER) BEFORE THEY LEFT. WHILE IN WASHINGTON THEY DISCUSSED ARMS PRICES AND DELAYS IN DELIVERIES CALLED FOR IN THE TREATY, A CONCERN RAISED BY GUTIERREZ MELLADO. THEY WERE TOLD THAT THE GOS KNEW OF THE PRICES AND LEAD TIMES FOR THESE ARMS (E.G., F-16S)

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WHEN IT SIGNED THE TREATY. THE US HAS NO OBJECTION TO SPANISH ACQUISITION OF ARMS FROM OTHER SOURCES (FRENCH MIRAGES). (COMMENT: SOLANA IMPLIED THAT THE US HAD DELAYED DELIVERIES OF THE F-16S. DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN MAY WISH TO POINT OUT IF ASKED THAT THE SPANISH HAVE NEVER ORDERED THE AIRCRAFT. IN THE TREATY THE US AGREED "TO FACILITATE ACQUISITION" OF 72 F-16S.)

-- THEY WERE PROUD TO HAVE BEEN THE FIRST SPANISH POLITICIANS TO INFORM WASHINGTON THAT THERE IS DISCONTENT IN SPAIN OVER POOR IMPLEMENTATION ON THE TREATY, SOMETHING NOT DONE BY EITHER THE SPANISH EMBASSY NOR ANY OTHER REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SUAREZ GOVERNMENT.

-- THEY WERE TREATED AS REPRESENTATIVES OF AN AUTHENTIC ALTERNATIVE GOVERNMENT BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT, DEMONSTRATING THAT A CHANGE IN POWER IN SPAIN WOULD NOT SURPRISE THE US.

-- STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS INDICATED THAT UCD AND GOS POLICY ON DEFENSE IS NO DIFFERENT FROM FRANCOIST POLICIES.

-- THERE IS A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF SPAIN, ATTRIBUTABLE TO A LACK OF EFFORT BY THE SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTRY,
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IN CERTAIN SECTORS OF THE US CONGRESS. A GROUP OF CONGRESSMEN, LED BY PHILIP BURTON, WILL COME TO SPAIN AT THE END OF MAY, AFTER THE NATO MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, TO TALK WITH POLITICAL PARTIES AND LEARN THEIR POSITIONS REGARDING SPANISH MEMBERSHIP IN NATO. STABLER

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